1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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he would ask the *Ten'dan'* and be given a place to build, or a place to farm. After the harvest of the early millet, they would send millet to give "water" to the groves, and so too, after the corn harvest. If blood came from any one, except from the nose, and fell upon the land, the *Ten'dan'* had to purify it. If Chiefs sold any man in exchange for cattle, the *Ten'dan* was given one to give to the land, but when people were sold in a time of famine in exchange for food it was not customary to give anything, but the land would be angry and kill a member of that family who had sold their kinsman, even (extending its vengeance) to a member of their daughter's family who had married far away. The land is a female and "above" is a male. When I sacrifice I call upon my father to "reach" his father who will "reach" the grove. Birth, crops, the getting of wives, good sleep, depend upon the land, who tells *Wen* (God). When two people were about to fight, and the *Ten'dan'* went to stop them, he would lay down his staff between them and no man might shoot arrows over that. The staff is a corn stalk. Any one who disregarded that would die. *Tobeg'* and *taku*[1] have not anything to do with the *Ten'dan'*.

The Position of the Ten'dan' in Cases of Adultery, Theft, Murder, and Suicide.

Adultery: 'The head of the section settled such cases; it was not formerly a Chief's concern.'

Theft: 'In case of theft, the thief, if caught, would be taken to the one who "owned" (i.e. was responsible for) him, who would settle the matter. If the parties could not agree, the matter was taken to the head of the section, who would take it if necessary to the Chief. Since Europeans came we have the *Kambon-nab'*.'[2]

Murder: 'If a man from Nangoot was killed (murdered?) by a man from (say) Pelino, and the slayer was caught, he would be killed by those who chased him. Afterwards, the Pelino people would bring cows, and the people of Nangoot also, and give to the Chief who would then give some to the *Ten'dan'*, keeping the remainder to purify his skins. There is a hole below the skin on which a Chief sits for the blood to flow. The family who had had a member murdered did not receive anything. The Pelino people and the Nangoot people concerned would mix the flour and water which each will bring and make peace. Were the Pelino man, in such a case, to escape, and if the

[1] See Chapter XXVIII.

[2] According to the Chief, these officials were part of the old administration.

[1] [Nankanse concepts apply to persons who have directly and indirectly committed a murder — Analyst]

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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and wife, may suffer shipwreck. Many women leave a husband or are taken from him after bearing one child to him. Only after a woman has borne two or three living children to a man does this bond become a really effective force in maintaining the marriage.

The real foundation of a lasting marriage is not custom or jural or ritual sanctions, but a satisfactory relationship between the married pair; and this is a complex tissue woven of many strands, changing and strengthening with the years. It has elements that can be translated into terms of reciprocal rights, duties, and services. But it is essentially a moral and personal bond, a question of the mutual adjustment of roles and persons in pursuit of the interests married partners have in one another and in common, and the purposes they share. The sexual bond is of vital importance in this relationship.

The personality of a spouse is important. A lazy man who neglects to provide for his wife sufficiently, a harsh man who strikes her at the least provocation, a man who through sickness, impotence, or lack of consideration does not or will not give her sexual satisfaction, yet holds her jealously to her marital fidelity; any such man may find it hard to keep a wife. A lazy woman, a disobedient woman, a woman with a hasty temper or one who is a confirmed gadabout, is likely to have several husbands before she finally settles down. A barren woman, too, with her growing sense of frustration as the years pass, tends to become restless and to drift from husband to husband. Such a one is Gelima, Naabdiya's elderly sister, who has tried no fewer than eighteen husbands and has been compelled to seek a haven for her declining years in her brother's home. Barrenness is one of the reasons for which a man may decide to get rid of a wife, but often enough a barren wife who is a good worker and has a tractable disposition gains her husband's devotion and remains with him. Occasionally a wife proves to be a petty thief, who filches the supplies of other women of the household or stores put aside by the men. She will get short shrift, and will be sent back in disgrace, formally, by the head of her husband's *dug*; for such a person is bound to cause endless disturbance in the family. A woman accused of witchcraft by a co-wife may be dealt with similarly, it is said, but in the few cases I have heard of the husbands have not divorced the women. Lastly, no man will tolerate a wife who suffers from nocturnal enuresis, however attractive or proficient she may be. To urinate on the sleeping-mat during sleep is a grave mystical offence endangering the life of the husband; hence, a woman suffering from this complaint is formally sent back to her parents.

The Wife's Ties with Her Paternal Family and Lineage

These accidents of personality affect only a minority of marriages. The constant social factors that steer the course of every marriage are of greater significance to us, and must be examined more fully. When

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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dies childless, and that children are the greatest source of joy and pride, comfort and support that anybody can have. The Tallensi are much like ourselves in this matter and do not think there is any inconsistency between these two aspects of parenthood. Their whole philosophy of life is like that. Realists as they are, they take it for granted that life has many risks and troubles, but, as they often put it, 'Does anybody desire death on that account?' When I told them that Europeans often refrain deliberately from having children, they were either sceptical or appalled.

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The Parent–Child Bond as an Absolute Bond

Tallensi say that the bonds between parent and child can never be obliterated and may not be repudiated. This is a fundamental moral principle and it goes back to the notion that bearing or begetting children is hard. From it follows the duty of filial piety.

You cannot disown your child. 'Even if your child is a good-for-nothing, you have no alternative but to keep him,' said Lɔyani, one of the most intelligent and upright men I knew. 'Have you not suffered to beget him?' he went on. 'How can you reject him? You are always thinking of your children's good, though they are often selfish and think only of their own advantage. Your child may be lazy or ill-behaved. But yet you cannot drive him away, you cannot harass him so that he quits you.'

Many examples could be quoted to illustrate the strength of this ideal. I sacked one of my servants for petty theft. A day or two later an elder who was known to be one of my friends came to intercede for him. He admitted that the man was a thief, but he was very disappointed when I declined to take him back. 'You are his father,' he said, 'and you ought to take him back.' Then, after a short silence, he added gravely, 'You white men! You are not like us. You do not understand the meaning of "to beg forgiveness".'

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A better instance is an incident in which Lɔyani himself was concerned some days after he made the comment quoted above. A youth of Lɔyani's clan stole a fowl owned by another member of his own joint family, whom he called his older brother (*bier*). The theft, a despicable thing in any case, was made blacker by the youth's attempt to conceal it; and when it was discovered, the whole clan was agog with it. The culprit's father, in his shame and anger at the disgrace brought upon his family, struck and cursed him saying that he must never again set foot in the house. Thereupon the young man took refuge with Lɔyani, whose son was his friend. Lɔyani himself, like all respectable people, was shocked at the theft. 'Heaven save me from theft,' he said, when he told me the story. 'Death were better than that. It is shameful.' And he went on to describe how everybody scorns and derides a thief. Nevertheless, as soon as the boy arrived Lɔyani went to the elders of the boy's lineage to get them to intercede with the father to withdraw his

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3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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curse and take his son back. But meanwhile the boy sneaked away and went to his brother in Mampurugu for fear of public ridicule. 'But', said Loyani, 'one day he will return and his father will certainly take him back.' It is because a man cannot disown his child that a Tale father always stands by his son in what the natives call *poyadir yɛla*, marriage affairs, the test occasions of jural responsibility. A man may have strong private objections to his son's marriage and eventually cause it to be dissolved. He may criticize and scold his son for it. But in public he will support the boy if the marriage does not infringe some rule of kinship or convention of social relationships. This, it should be noted, is not the same thing as a man's responsibility for his son's bride-price which rests on a different principle. For the same reason a woman can never be denied refuge in her father's house if she has nowhere else to stay.

A woman, too, cannot disown her child. Indeed Tallensi say that it is unthinkable for a woman, bound as she is to her child by even stronger emotional bonds than a man. It happens, of course, that women desert, or are taken away from one husband to marry another and leave a child behind. But if the child is still too tiny to fend for itself it accompanies its mother until it is old enough to be separated (*pɔhɔg*) from her. Tallensi are very critical of a woman who deserts a child when she leaves its father, though not without ulterior motives; for a runaway wife is a loss, whether she leaves children or not. As has been mentioned, they say that in such cases 'Rearing is more important than bearing'. And yet, they say, a woman yearns after her child no matter who has the custody of it. She might easily desert a later husband to return to an earlier husband with whom she has left a child; and if a woman who has been married more than once returns to her first husband, his rights take precedence of all the others' by Tale custom. That is why men object strongly to a wife's attempting to visit or even see a child she has left with a former husband. I have seen a man keep watch on his wife for days lest she make such an attempt. 'Do you know what bearing (a child) means to a woman?' he said, in explanation. In any case, her marital history makes no difference to the *song* (uterine) tie between a woman and her child and to the social relationships arising out of it. As we have already learnt, there is no surer guarantee that a woman will stay with a husband than if she has two or three children by him. If she has children, a woman who commits adultery almost invariably returns to her husband, risking the wrath of his ancestor spirits and enduring the shame of a semi-public confession. If she has none, she usually runs off with her paramour.

The ideas we have been discussing are not thought to have a ritual sanction where own parents and children are concerned. But with proxy parents, as might be expected, a ritual sanction comes into the picture openly. A man who disowns or ill-treats or in other ways neglects the

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

After that she must wear a perineal band even at night, in the privacy of her own room, for the sake of modesty. Not to do so, *de mara valom*, ' is embarrassing ' for her and others. Similarly it is indecorous for a young man, especially if he is married, to go about without a loin cloth. His comrades would scoff at him, womenfolk jeer, and his wife be ashamed. Yet the Tallensi have not the slightest sense of shame about the naked body or any physiological functions, all of which they discuss publicly and openly. Ask any one, child or adult, the sex of an infant and the answer will be to open its legs and expose the genitals with the word ' boy ' or ' girl '. An infant's excretory processes arouse no embarrassment and meet with no attempts at regulation. As we have seen it is expected to learn cleanliness in due course. The child is made to understand that excreting indoors is a nuisance to those who have to keep the house clean. No one would dream of chastising an infant for this misdemeanour. These are all matters of decency and decorum learnt without formal instructions as direct adjustments to the social space, through the influence of the expectation of normal behaviour.

It is otherwise with the morality of property. A thief incurs disgrace and universal opprobrium, and even small children of 6 and 7 express contempt for one. A child that steals, like one who neglects a task, can expect a severe beating if his father is a conscientious citizen. ' Don't let Tii (a boy of about 6) come and see your things,' said Batiignwol, a little girl of 7 or 8, to me one day, ' he 's a thief. He stole his mother's ground-nuts and meat and his father beat him and tied him up.' Theft is immoral as well as criminal. Lying, by contrast, is considered merely foolish and contemptible. It causes annoyance and a liar's comrades distrust him, but one would not punish a child for lying unless it led to serious consequences. Such misdemeanours, nevertheless, go beyond what is merely ' unbecoming '. They are not nice, *a-pu maha*.

Finally there is a type of observance which is a matter of conscience rather than of public approval or reprobation. Many of these have a ritual character and most of them are associated with mystical notions. There are food taboos which must be observed from infancy; there are ritual obligations such as those connected with mourning, which a person may escape till he reaches adulthood, but

6: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1937 FE11 Tallensi FE11

226 65 and to give moral support to a man of their own rank, members of his own family, and the *bayardaana*, who, in addition to the sacrificial animals he receives from the owner, is entitled to a present of fish.

226 Why then do owners of pools call out communal fishing expeditions? They themselves say "because our ancestors did so." A more adequate explanation suggests itself from an examination of the fishing situation in relation to the technique of fishing and to the conditions of ownership of pools. Fishing with hook and line is practised by a few people throughout the year, but the technique is rudimentary, suitable for the capture of an occasional fish and not for the provision of a regular supply. The net technique, on the other hand, cannot be satisfactorily employed by individuals. It is essentially a communal technique. There is thus a practical necessity for communal fishing.

226 423 554 Principally, however, fishing is correlated with the ownership of pools. With few exceptions appointment to a chieftainship by the Paramount Chief of the Division constitutes the title to the ownership of a particular pool. Of the exceptions, I have record of one authentic case of a pool owned by a single lineage and transmitted according to the laws of inheritance. Tradition said that it had been purchased by the ancestor [622] of this lineage from a chief in a time of severe famine. To organize a communal fishing expedition is thus a prerogative of chieftainship[1]. It maintains the prestige and proclaims the status of a chief beyond the confines of his own limited territory. Striking proof of this occurred when the Chief of Yinduri announced an expedition to his pool. When the people arrived there, the pool was found to be so choked with weeds that fishing was impossible. Someone from another settlement suggested fishing a neighbouring pool, belonging to another chief, instead. The people of Yinduri were so incensed by this affront to the dignity of their chief that they attacked and beat the offender. Besides, [685] such an act of communal poaching would have exposed them to the penalty of a heavy fine.

226 621 Chiefs, consequently, desire large attendances drawn from a wide radius at fishing expeditions. Actually, however, the territorial range of the attendance at any expedition is limited by the factor of contiguity—the further a settlement is from that of the owner of the pool, the smaller will be the contingent coming from it; while the social constitution of the attendance is conditioned by the principles of kinship. Thus, a man will always accompany an expedition arranged by his mother's brother or other kinsman, even if he is from a distant settlement, since he would probably be permitted to keep his catch, and would be less drawn to expeditions under the auspices of non-kinsmen. Similarly, the *Namoos* clans turn out in far greater numbers to expeditions arranged by *Namoos* chiefs than to those of the *Tallis* chiefs. Another factor influencing the social constitution of fishing expeditions is that people tend to go in family parties.

[554] [1] A commoner who owns a river, as in the case cited above, naturally follows the general practice and on the occasion of the fishing expedition enjoys a prestige equivalent to that of a chief.

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The modal factor in the situation is the magic. On one of the expeditions I attended the owner had his own fishing magic and made the sacrifices himself; but I do not know how general this is. Otherwise, the magician's office has its traditional warranty. It is an ancient privilege and even duty of his lineage to perform the rites for the lineage of the particular holder of the chieftainship. The association, like every relationship of this sort, is accounted for on the grounds of ancestral kinship. Thus a community of interest, such as could never arise in a purely commercial relationship, is presupposed. Functionally, whether the owner or the magician are united in one personage or not, magic enters into the fishing configuration as the owner's principal instrument of organization, helping to assert his status and rights in the fishing situation. This inference receives confirmation from the following observations: If a chief owns several pools, once the complete series of rites have been performed at the first pool to be fished, it is sufficient, subsequently, if the riverside rites alone are performed. Again, if, as sometimes happens, two adjacent pools are fished on the same day, the second will not be entered until it has been sprayed and the signal given. Thus the final and public rite, the actual organizing act, is emphasized. But the clinching evidence for this is the fact that the magical act proclaims the owner's responsibility for the satisfactory outcome of the expedition which he has organized. The behaviour of the people, more so, the ideology associated with situations of this type (full documentation of which must await later publication) and the purpose expressed in the magic prove this. Magic is, therefore, the binding factor in the fishing configuration, linking together the principal constituents—the objective facts of place and economic purpose, the owner, the people who come to fish and the relevant ideological principles.

The magic is able to achieve this in virtue of its content; that is, the control it ostensibly exercises over the psychologically critical factor in the situation, the dangers which might be encountered in the water. It is towards these dangers that the magic is *prima facie* directed. Its efficacy is never questioned; for even if, as sometimes happens, someone should be injured by a crocodile or fish, the ready explanation lies to hand that he has offended an ancestor spirit who took this occasion to punish him. An injury to an individual is his own affair. Nevertheless, nobody carries out private magic for his own protection. Again, fear of injury is not a deterrent to poaching either by individuals or, as in the case of the Yinduri expedition, by a group.[1]

It is obvious, therefore, that the magic is valid only within the context of the organized fishing expedition, promoted by the rightful owner. The psychological facts upon which the magic is built have relevance only within this context. The real danger, or the correlative fear of injury, does not precipitate a magical rite whenever an individual or group is liable to it, but only within the appropriate social situation.

[1] Indeed fishing expeditions are sometimes made to distant unowned pools and then no magic is performed, as I discovered during my second field trip in 1936. This is because these expeditions are informal, not organized by a responsible personage, and comparable to poaching.